

at our hearings, he talked about one trucker who had driven from the West Coast to the State of Virginia in 48 hours, 48 hours, and in the cab there were jars of urine where he did not even stop to go to the bathroom. You wonder why we have such a miserable record, why so many people are dying.

And then, in three short months, under NAFTA, trucks are going to be able to cross the border in Mexico and come into the United States. All of these trucks will be able to go into all of the States in our country, and the IG found recently that Mexico has no hours-of-service requirements, no logbooks are required for truckers, no vehicle maintenance standards, no roadside inspections, no safety rating. When the IG conducted a survey of the effects of NAFTA, he found 44 percent of the trucks were in such poor condition that they were taken off the road immediately. So we can see if these trucks now are permitted to come across the border from Mexico in addition to the unsafe program that we now have.

Because of these findings, the Department of Transportation's IG has said we should move the Office of Motor Carriers, and the National Transportation Safety Board, and many, many others agree.

Today, there may be a vote on the floor under the suspensions calendar that will roll back the efforts that have been made with regard to truck safety. So on behalf of the 5,374 people and their families who have died in truck related deaths, I would hope that Congress would not roll it back. The question is, who controls this place? Will it be the special interests, or will it be the American interests? The Congress took the action it did in the conference report to advance safety. Hopefully, the Congress will not roll it back.

Madam Speaker, I ask people to focus, Members back in their offices, look at this and other pictures that I will bring up today to see if we really want to roll back truck inspection safety. I hope not.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Having reference to an earlier speech this morning, the Chair would remind all Members that it is not in order to urge or advocate action or inaction by the Senate.

QUESTIONING THE CONTINUANCE OF RUSSIAN AID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, here in Congress we must answer tough

questions regarding the continuance of aid to Russia. We, along with the IMF, have pumped billions and billions of dollars into a corrupt system. Is it any wonder that the Russian economy is floundering? How can we stand by while this fraud continues?

Was anyone surprised to learn that Moscow's government and the Russian Central Bank were not following sound banking principles? The indicators have been there since the fall of the Soviet Union that an organized crime establishment was thriving under a weakened Russian Government. Yet, the U.S. Government has continued to loan billions of dollars to this high-risk government.

The amount of Russian aid and the numbers involved in embezzlement are staggering. According to Russian officials, capital flow from the USSR and Russia between 1985 and 1999 was over \$120 billion, possibly as high as \$200 billion. That is more than the entire foreign debt on the Russian Federation, in and up to 10 times more than the total foreign investment in Russia.

Now, sadly, Madam Speaker, a significant portion of this money was plundered by self-serving Federal and local government officials. We in Congress must acknowledge this catastrophe and take steps to prevent this from happening again.

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Even more disturbing is that this money was siphoned off and funneled out of Moscow and mixed with the profit from activities such as prostitution and illegal weapons sales.

Moreover, a Lugano-based engineering and construction company, Mobitex, allegedly opened credit cards and deposited large sums in private accounts for the benefit of president Boris Yeltsin, as well as members of his family and close associates, according to the Swiss authorities.

Madam Speaker, as the scandal unfolds, we must re-evaluate our policy with Russia that has been pursued by the IMF and the Clinton administration. Congress should also review the lax standards applied by the U.S. Government and international financial institutions in the distribution of financial aid to post-Communist and developing nations.

Earlier this year, the IMF and Russian central bank acknowledged the diversion of IMF funds to private companies. There were other reports that the World Bank loans were also misused or embezzled by Russian officials. In fact, one disclosure was a \$250 million loan made by the prime minister of Russia and a close ally of Boris Yeltsin at the time.

The extensive abuse of U.S. aid could not have happened had the President, Vice President, and other senior administration officials not aggressively pushed for multi-million dollar loans to keep Boris Yeltsin afloat.

The question, Madam Speaker, occurs with regard to how much did they know. Were there reports about the abuse from the intelligence communities and the FBI? How could this administration continue to support pumping billions more into this flawed system?

Another possibility is that the misuse was overlooked by bankers who had financial gains in assisting with the laundering of this money. They would potentially stand to gain the most if the United States and the IMF continued to prop up the Russian economy. Did political pressure from these bankers help keep the money flowing continually into the Russian economy?

The Committee on Banking and Financial Services has the unique opportunity to stop the abuse associated with Russian assistance. Congress should assess the damage that has been done by this corruption. We must ascertain whether the law has been broken by any U.S. officials or banks.

Within the IMF, what steps are being taken to improve obvious problems with Russian policy? Has the IMF bailout of 1998 significantly improved Russia's economy? I hardly see how the answer could be yes, since the \$40 billion short-term bond market, GKO, collapsed, the ruble was devalued by 75 percent, and the rate of inflation increased from 6 percent annually to 60 percent.

Where are the accountability measures? Where are the preventative steps to avoid this happening again? Are due diligence standards or risk assessments being applied to foreign loans? How could between \$4.5 to \$10 billion, not million but billions, go unnoticed?

Congress must face the music and answer these questions. We cannot continue to line the pockets of corrupt officials.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Karl P. Donfried, Professor of Religion, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, offered the following prayer:

Standing as we do in the large confusions of the world not accustomed to peace, we pray, O Lord, gird us with